

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SOFIA 1030

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, CGEN, PFOR, BU (MAREVA, RUMYANA AND YORDANKA)
SUBJECT: MAREV CASE

REF: A) STATE 107758; B) SOFIA 1024

1. PROFITING FROM PRESENCE OF DEPUTY ASST SEC ARMITAGE IN SOFIA, INSTRUCTIONS IN REF A WERE EXECUTED BY A "ONE-TWO PUNCH" STRATEGY MAY 16: ARMITAGE IN GENERAL REVIEW OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS IN GENERAL AND US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS IN PARTICULAR HIGHLIGHTED IMPORTANCE OF MAREV CASE IN COURSE OF TWO-HOUR SESSION WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TSVETKOV. HE SAID AS LONG AS THIS ISSUE IS NOT REMOVED IT IS BOUND TO IMPINGE ON OUR RELATIONS. IT IS VIEWED FROM OUR SIDE AS A HUMANITARIAN CASE, AND GOB MUST UNDERSTAND THAT SUCH MATTERS ARE IMPORTANT TO USG, PUBLIC, PRESS AND CONGRESS. AMBASSADOR THEN FOLLOWED THIS UP WITH SEPARATE "PRIVATE" CONVERSATION WITH TSVETKOV AT THE SAME MEETING BUT WITH SMALLER ATTENDANCE, AT WHICH (SEE FURTHER BELOW) HE PLACED EMPHASIS ON THE UNFORTUNATE TIMING OF THE FORTHCOMING VARNA COURT CASE.

2. RESPONDING TO ARMITAGE, TSVETKOV REITERATED IN DETAIL THE CONCESSIONS AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS GOB PREPARED TO MAKE FOR MRS. MAREV IF SHE COMES TO BULGARIA TO SEE HER CHILDREN, AND SAID "AS FAR AS WE KNOW THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS NOT CLEARLY EXPLAINED" THESE MATTERS TO HER. GOB HAD
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HEARD THAT MRS. MAREV HAD BEEN TOLD THAT SHE MIGHT BE PROSECUTED OR OTHERWISE ENDANGERED BY COMING HERE, AND HE WISHED TO REPEAT FORMALLY THAT THERE WOULD BE NO INTERFERENCE OF ANY KIND. HOWEVER, "THE TRUTH IS THAT HER CHILDREN DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE BULGARIA" AND IT WOULD BE AGAINST PRINCIPLES OF HUMANITARIANISM TO FORCE THEM AGAINST THEIR WILL. HE SAID PROPAGANDA SURROUNDING THIS CASE DID NOT SEEM TO HAVE PURPOSE

OF SERVING HUMANITARIANISM BUT USES SUCH THEMES AS A "VEIL".

3. TSVETKOV THEN SAID "I CANNOT AGREE THAT IF WE DO NOT SOLVE THIS CASE THIS WILL IMPINGE ON OUR RELATIONS." MAYBE HE HAD MISUNDERSTOOD, BUT IT WOULD BE A VERY SERIOUS MATTER TO ALLOW ONE PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL TO "FRUSTRATE INTER-STATE RELATIONS" WHEN HIS GRIEVANCE INVOLVED A PARTICULAR, COMPLICATED CASE AND WAS NOT REPRESENTATIVE OF WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING. IF THIS PRINCIPLE WERE ACCEPTED, "THE HAPPINESS OF MILLIONS" COULD BE AFFECTED BY ONE (ILL-INTENTIONED) INDIVIDUAL. TO ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN WOULD BE A "VERY RISKY POLICY".

4. DEPT ASST SEC ARMITAGE RESPONDED THAT WHILE HE DID NOT WANT TO GO INTO DETAILS OF THE MAREV CASE, HE WANTED TO MAKE SURE HE HAD BEEN CORRECTLY UNDERSTOOD: THE DEPARTMENT HAD FAITHFULLY COMMUNICATED THE GOB'S OFFER TO THE MAREVS. OUR OBJECTIVES IN HUMANITARIAN MATTERS IN GENERAL AND IN THE MAREV CASE IN PARTICULAR HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH "PROPAGANDA". THE MAREV CASE IS PERCEIVED IN THE US AS A HUMANITARIAN MATTER. IF NOT RESOLVED, IT WOULD BECOME AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF OUR SOCIETY, OUR PRESS, AND OUR CONGRESS. THESE ARE REALITIES WHICH THE GOB SHOULD FACE. AND IT WAS ALSO A REALITY THAT OTHER MATTERS WOULD INEVITABLY BE AFFECTED BY THE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH OUR RELATIONS ARE CONDUCTED.

5. LATER IN THE MEETING, AMBASSADOR TALKED SEPARATELY WITH TSVETKOV IN THE PRESENCE ONLY OF YANKOV, THE AMERICAN DESK OFFICER. AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED HIS INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO SEE CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND ASKED TSVETKOV TO REPEAT WHAT FOLLOWED TO HIM. HE SAID ON MAY 20 AN ACTION IS SCHEDULED AT THE VARNA PEOPLE'S COURT WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE AS OBJECTIVE TO DEPRIVE THE MAREVS OF THEIR PARENTAL RIGHTS. (TSVETKOV SAID HE HAD NEVER HEARD OF THIS.) THIS WAS A MOST UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT. WE HAD ATTEMPTED TO OBTAIN DETAILS FROM THE BULGARIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON BUT DID NOT HAVE ALL THE FACTS. REPORT THAT THE PARENTS HAD BEEN DEPRIVED OF THEIR RIGHTS COULD BE MISINTERPRETED AS AN "IRON CURTAIN" BEING ROLLED DOWN BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR CHILDREN. OBVIOUSLY THIS WAS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE GOB BUT IT WOULD BE SO PERCEIVED.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SOFIA 1030

6. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, THE US PRESS WOULD HEIGHTEN ITS INTEREST IN THE MAREV CASE. IF IT IS CLAIMED IN VARNA THAT PARENTS HAD ABANDONED THEIR CHILDREN, THEN IT WAS PROBABLE THAT MAREVS WOULD POINT OUT PUBLICLY THAT EXIT APPLICATIONS FOR THEIR CHILDREN HAD BEEN FILED IN 1972 AND 1976. THEY MIGHT CLAIM, AS WE HAD HEARD THEM SAY, THAT THEIR CHILDREN AS LATE AS LAST NOVEMBER HAD SAID ON THE TELEPHONE THAT THEY WISHED TO BE REUNITED WITH THEM IN AMERICA. THEY MIGHT ALSO CLAIM (AND WE MAKE NO JUDGMENT WHETHER THIS IS CORRECT) THAT DURING RECENT MONTHS LETTERS WHICH THEY KNEW THEIR DAUGHTERS HAD WRITTEN THEM HAD BEEN INTERCEPTED BY BULGARIAN AUTHORITIES. THIS SEEMED THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME FOR THE AFFAIR TO BE INFLAMED IN SUCH A MANNER.

7. TSVETKOV ASKED, ALMOST PLEADED, THAT MRS. MAREV COME TO BULGARIA SO THAT THE CASE COULD BE SETTLED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WHILE SHE HAS NOT DECIDED TO COME HERE, IT IS A FACT THAT THE CASE IS SUBJECT OF DIPLO-MATIC DISCUSSIONS. WE ARE NOT MAKING A RECOMMENDATION, AND DO NOT WISH TO SEEM TO BE INTERFERING IN JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS, BUT POINT TO INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN GOB OFFERING TO FACILITATE VISIT OF PARENTS, THUS IMPLYING THAT IF CHILDREN WISHED TO GO THEY WOULD BE FREE TO DO SO, AND COURT SUDDENLY SCHEDULING CASE ON PARENTAL RIGHTS AFTER MAREV CHILDREN HAD BEEN IN AN ORPHANAGE FOR SEVERAL YEARS. IT WOULD SEEM TO US THAT A COURT DECISION AT THIS TIME WOULD NEEDLESSLY FURTHER INFLAME AND COMPLICATE
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AN ALREADY UNFORTUNATE AND COMPLICATED ISSUE.

8. TSVETKOV SAID HE WAS "NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CONSULAR MATTERS" AND AMBASSADOR SHOULD SEE HEAD OF CONSULAR DEPARTMENT. AMB SAID HIS INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN TO SEE THE FOREIGN MINISTER, AND IF HE WENT TO LOWER LEVEL THAN DEPUTY MINISTER BY SEEING ZHELENSKI (HEAD OF CONSULAR DEPT) HE "WOULD BE FIRED".

TSVETKOV ASKED WHY SO MUCH TIME OF SO MANY HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS
HAD TO BE USED TO DISCUSS THIS CASE WHEN SO MANY MORE ON-
STRUCTIVE MATTERS IN US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS COULD BE DISCUSSED
INSTEAD. AMBASSADOR SAID MR. ARMITAGE HAD ANSWERED THAT
QUESTION. TSVETKOV FINALLY PROMISED TO REPORT TO FOREIGN
MINISTER MLADENOV WHAT AMBASSADOR HAD SAID ABOUT THE VARNA
COURT CASE.
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